

SAFETY MESSAGE

Personal Safety is our #1 priority

Staying on the Safe Side of Corrosives

Corrosives Burn or Destroy

Types of corrosives Corrosives are substances that burn or destroy tissue on contact.

There are two types of corrosives:

- Acids.
- Bases (alkalis).

The warning label on all corrosives will tell you how to protect yourself.

Because corrosives are used in many industrial applications, you may find that you work with several of them.

Read the MSDS accompanying each one to learn what special dangers it poses in addition to being corrosive. Then take steps to protect yourself and your environment from those dangers.

Corrosives burn eyes and skin

Corrosives react with other substances to eat away or chemically burn whatever they touch. They can burn skin, irritating or even blistering it, and can severely damage eyesight.

The extent of corrosive burn depends on the concentration of the corrosive and how long it stays on your skin.

This is why you should treat a corrosive spill as a chemical burn emergency. Immediately flush the affected area with water for 20 minutes and get medical attention.

Protective Measures

Correct protective equipment

Proper corrective equipment is your guarantee against skin or eye contact with a corrosive.

Workers who deal with corrosives need to wear goggles and, in many cases, a face shield for full protection against splashes.

Wear clothing and gloves made of neoprene or other chemical-resistant material. Work with some corrosives requires you to wear a fully encapsulated suit and chemical-resistant boots.

Check your protective clothing for rips or wear each time you put it on.

**Avoid breathing
corrosives**

Wear an approved respirator equipped with the right cartridge or canister for the corrosive you are using.

Inhaled corrosive gases can cause irritation of the mouth and respiratory passages, coughing, difficult breathing, or respiratory failure.

If you inhale corrosive gas, move into fresh air immediately and get medical attention to make sure there is no internal damage.

**Keep containers
closed**

Keep containers closed when not in use. This warning points to the dangers of corrosives in the environment.

Some corrosives produce toxic or explosive gasses.

Acids and bases react violently with water and with each other; they are flammable or contribute to the fire hazard of other substances.

Make sure all containers, including temporary containers that others may use, are clearly labeled and in good condition, with no cracks, leaks, or dents.

Store containers according to approved guidelines; keep acids, bases, and corrosives separate from one another or other substances.

Mixing corrosives

When mixing a corrosive with water, always add the corrosive to water; adding water to a concentrated acid may produce a violent reaction.

Avoid pouring corrosives into the drain; dispose of them according to company policy.

Clean up small spills immediately. If there is a large spill, evacuate the area and report the spill. Leave cleanup to a trained and well equipped cleanup crew.

**Ventilate
adequately**

When acids react with metal they produce explosive hydrogen gas, which poses a fire hazard.

Some corrosives produce oxygen, which also poses a fire hazard.

Many corrosives are flammable in themselves.

Safe handling, along with adequate ventilation, minimizes the risk of an accident involving fire as well as accidental inhalation.

**Always wash after
handling**

A spill on gloves or equipment may not be noticed until later, when you accidentally touch the contaminated material.

Washing is your only guarantee against contamination. Begin by thoroughly washing your gloves. If a corrosive splashes on your protective clothing, carefully follow company policy for removing the contaminated clothing.

Keep your street clothes separate from your work clothes.

Make sure your work area and equipment are clean.